

Minnesota Department of Public Safety
Office of Justice Programs
Crime Victim Services
445 Minnesota Street, Suite 2300
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1515
1-888-622-8799

Request for Proposals

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) S.T.O.P.
24-month Special Projects
January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2014

Description

Purpose

This RFP is designed to solicit proposals to develop and strengthen effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies to combat violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. These funds are for time-limited special projects to create systems change by improving the criminal justice system's response to violence against women.

Note: *These funds are not intended for supporting on-going direct advocacy services to victims, or to sustain existing victim service programming. These funds are also not intended for Sexual Assault Multi-disciplinary Action Response Teams (SMART).*

Grant Term

Applicants may apply for the 24-month grant period of January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2014.

Eligible Applicants

Public and private non-profit entities including local units of government, Tribal reservations, and community-based non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for these funds.

For non-profits: Federal 501(c)3 tax exempt status is not required. To be eligible, an applicant must be legally incorporated as a non-profit in Minnesota and possess state and federal identification numbers. Community-based groups that are not yet incorporated are eligible to apply if using fiscal agents with non-profit status.

Application Deadline

Applications must be submitted using the web-based E-grants system by **4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 14, 2012**. No paper submissions will be accepted. Applications will not be received after this deadline.

Funds Available

Approximately \$1.9 million is available for time-limited special projects. Eligible projects must be a collaborative effort between criminal justice system agencies and community-based sexual assault and/or domestic violence programs. Applicants may apply for grants of any amount, however it is anticipated the majority of awards will fall within the \$40,000 to \$250,000 range for the 24-month grant period.

Application Process

All applications must be submitted via E-grants, the Office of Justice Program (OJP) online grants management system, at <https://app.dps.mn.gov/egrants/>. E-grants can also be accessed via the OJP website at <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ojp/grants>. To establish a user account if you do not already have one, click on the purple “New User” option in the login box in the upper right corner of the E-grants website and follow instructions to fill out the profile.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- **For questions regarding the application, please contact your grant manager or:**
Chris Anderson, Office of Justice Programs, Minnesota Department of Public Safety:
chris.anderson@state.mn.us or 651-201-7302.
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):**
A FAQ document will be updated weekly with responses to questions received about the application, up until the November 14th due date. Access the FAQ on the OJP website: <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ojp/grants>.

Match Requirements

All applicants (Indian tribal governments are exempt) must be able to meet a cash or in-kind match. To calculate the match requirement for your specific application, multiply the amount for which you are requesting by 0.3334 and round up to the nearest dollar. Matching funds may not be derived from federal funds. All funds designated as match are restricted to the same uses as the VAWA program funds and must be expended within the grant period.

Examples of *cash match*: state or local government appropriations, individual donations, private foundation grants, United Way, etc. Examples of *in-kind match*: a) donations of such things as equipment, office supplies, office space, training materials; and b) monetary value of donated time providing program or technical support/services.

Grant Selection Process

1. Applications are due in E-grants by **4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 14, 2012.**
2. OJP staff and panels of grant reviewers review and rate applications using the criteria for funding. Grant review panels reflect the diversity of communities and the purpose and intent of funds. To ensure fair, impartial decisions, grant reviewers are bound by the strict OJP conflict of interest policy. Applicants may not have an opportunity to make a presentation to the grant review committee or to be present at the review; therefore it is important that all pertinent information be included in the application.
3. The panel's recommendations are forwarded to the executive director of OJP for final funding decisions. Applicants will receive written notice of the executive director's decision within 30 days of the grant review.
4. If your proposal is approved for funding, you may be asked to submit minor revisions to your proposal (e.g., to correct budget errors or clarify goals and objectives). After revisions are made, a formal grant agreement will be prepared and must be signed by the applicant organization and OJP. When the signature process is complete the applicant organization receives a final signed copy of the grant agreement and may be issued an advance payment. Upon issuance of the grant contract the application becomes a legally binding contract between the grantee and OJP.

Definitions

Domestic violence program = an organization, or program component of an organization that has a primary mission of serving victims of domestic violence.

Sexual assault program = an organization, or program component of an organization that has a primary mission of serving sexual assault victims.

Stalking program = an organization, or program component of an organization that has a primary mission of serving victims of stalking.

Local unit of government = refers to any unit of government (e.g., city or county attorney's office, law enforcement agencies, etc.).

Traditionally underserved population = includes populations traditionally underserved because of geographic location (such as rural isolation), underserved racial and ethnic populations, and populations underserved because of special needs (such as language barriers, disabilities, immigration status or age).

Diverse backgrounds = applicants should demonstrate their understanding that women have unique needs that may be based on ethnic and cultural background, age, disability, sexual orientation, income, geographic isolation, and so on. Your application should reflect an understanding of the diversity of your community. It should also include plans for addressing the unique needs of groups in your community.

Cultural proficiency = is demonstrated by incorporating, at all levels of the organization or project, the following: the importance of culture; the assessment of cross-cultural relations; vigilance towards the dynamics that result from cultural differences; the expansion of cultural knowledge and the adaptation of services to meet culturally specific needs (Cross, T.L., 1988). Some examples of cultural proficiency within an organization include:

- staff reflect the diverse population served
- staff are trained in cultural diversity and cross-cultural communication
- staff understand the unique set of stressors affecting communities of color and cultural communities that may impact their response to violence and/or service needs
- physical environment and programming reflects multiculturalism
- program has working relationships with organizations and communities of color

Technical assistance = includes a variety of methods (e.g., training, onsite and phone consultation, meeting facilitation, protocol development, etc.) designed to assist an organization or community in improving their response to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

Statutory Purpose Areas

Grants supported through the VAWA STOP program funds must meet one or more of the following statutory purpose areas. Not all STOP fund purpose areas are listed here – only those that pertain to special project funding to create systems change in the criminal justice system.

- training law enforcement officers, judges, other court personnel, and prosecutors to more effectively identify and respond to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, and dating violence;
- developing, training, or expanding units of law enforcement officers, judges, other court personnel, and prosecutors specifically targeting violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence;
- developing and implementing more effective police, court, and prosecution policies, protocols, orders, and services specifically devoted to preventing, identifying, and responding to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence;

- developing, installing, or expanding data collection and communication systems, including computerized systems, linking police, prosecutors, and courts for the purpose of identifying and tracking arrests, protection orders, violations of protection orders, prosecutions, and convictions for violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence;
- supporting formal and informal Statewide, multidisciplinary efforts, to the extent not supported by State funds, to coordinate the response of State law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts, victim services agencies, and other State agencies and departments, to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, and dating violence;
- training of sexual assault forensic medical personnel examiners in the collection and preservation of evidence, analysis, prevention, and providing expert testimony and treatment of trauma related to sexual assault; and
- developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs to assist law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, and others to address the needs and circumstances of older and disabled women who are victims of domestic violence or sexual assault, including recognizing, investigating, and prosecuting instances of such violence or assault and targeting outreach and support, counseling, and other victim services to such older and disabled individuals.

Project Ideas and Activities

The emphasis of VAWA funding continues to be on the implementation of comprehensive strategies addressing violence against women that are sensitive to the needs and safety of victims and hold offenders accountable for their crimes. All states, including Minnesota, are being asked to carry out these strategies by forging lasting partnerships between the criminal justice system and victim advocacy organizations, and by encouraging communities to look beyond traditional resources and to look to new partners to respond more vigorously to domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking crimes, such as faith-based and community organizations.

Special project grants funded under this RFP are intended to create permanent improvements in the criminal justice system's response to violence against women. Funded activities must add value and be efforts that are above and beyond what currently exist in the community. Funds are not intended to sustain existing programming. Applicants will be asked to complete a sustainability narrative to address sustainability of the systems change generated by this project funding.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to utilize appropriate sections of *The Blueprint for Safety - An Interagency Response to Domestic Violence Crimes* in developing ideas to address domestic violence issues. *The Blueprint* may be downloaded at <http://stpaulblueprintspip.org/>.

The following project ideas are a compilation of suggested projects from a variety of sources. This list is provided to generate ideas for special projects and is in no way representative of a complete list of ideas. Applicants are encouraged to apply for projects that fit their community or the state's needs, whether or not included in this list.

- ❑ Create local coordinating group including law enforcement, prosecution and victim services to develop strategies to enhance compliance to no contact orders (including Orders for Protection – OFP, domestic abuse no contact orders – DANCO, and harassment restraining orders -- HRO) and enhance the effectiveness of the criminal justice response to no contact orders. Utilize *The Blueprint for Safety - An Interagency Response to Domestic Violence Crimes* (<http://stpaulblueprintspip.org/>).
- ❑ Conduct Full Faith and Credit training for the state and the Tribes;
- ❑ Provide comprehensive training to law enforcement, prosecution, court personnel and victim services on sexual assault, to encourage increased reporting, arrest and successful prosecution of perpetrators;
- ❑ Develop policies, protocols and/or strategies for implementing evidence-based risk/danger assessments (lethality assessment) for pre-trial release and bail decisions in cases involving domestic violence.
- ❑ Conduct safety audits and/or fatality review teams at the state and local levels which examine the experiences of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking victims through the entire legal system, in an effort to develop and implement more effective police, court, and prosecutor policies, protocols, and orders.
- ❑ Support Family Violence Unit programs within law enforcement agencies that specifically address victim needs and hold abusers accountable.
- ❑ Conduct training for prosecution and law enforcement on improving domestic violence evidence-based investigations and prosecuting (versus victim dependent investigations and prosecuting).

Activities That May Compromise Victim Safety

Ensuring victim safety is the guiding principle underlying the VAWA funding program. The following activities have been found to jeopardize victim safety, deter or prevent physical or emotional healing for victims, or allow offenders to escape responsibility for their actions and cannot be supported with VAWA funding:

- Procedures or policies that exclude victims from receiving safe shelter, advocacy services, counseling, and other assistance based on their actual or perceived age, immigration status, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental health condition, physical health condition, criminal record, work in the sex industry, or the age and/or gender of their children;
- Offering perpetrators the option of entering pre-trial diversion programs;
- Requiring mediation or counseling for couples as a systemic response to domestic violence or sexual assault, or in situations in which child sexual abuse is alleged;
- Requiring victims to report sexual assault, stalking, or domestic violence crimes to law enforcement or forcing victims to participate in criminal proceedings;
- Relying on court-mandated batterer intervention programs that do not use the coercive power of the criminal justice system to hold batterers accountable for their behavior;
- Supporting policies that deny individuals access to services based on their relationship to the perpetrator;
- Supporting policies or engaging in practices that impose restrictive conditions to be met by the victim in order to receive services (e.g., attending counseling, seeking an order for protection);
- Sharing of confidential victim information with outside organizations and/or individuals without the documented consent of the victim;
- Placing of batterers in anger management programs; or
- Procedures that would penalize or impose sanctions on victims of domestic violence or sexual assault for failure to testify against the abuser and/or perpetrator.

In addition, applicants should be cognizant of victim confidentiality. In accordance with 42 U.S.C. § 13925(b)(2), applicants receiving OVW funding must protect the confidentiality and privacy of persons receiving OVW-funded services to support victims' safety. OVW grantees and their sub-grantees are prohibited from disclosing personally identifying information collected in connection with services requested, utilized, or denied through the grantee and their sub-

grantee's programs, to any third party or third party database without informed, written, reasonably time-limited, consent of the person, unless compelled by statutory or court mandate. In this case, grantees and sub-grantees must make reasonable attempts to provide notice to victims affected by the disclosure of information. They must also take necessary steps to protect the privacy and safety of the persons affected by the release of the information. Regarding un-emancipated minors or persons with disabilities lacking capacity to consent, a parent or guardian may consent to the disclosure; however, if the parent or guardian is the abuser of the minor, the person with disabilities, or the minor's other parent, he or she is prohibited from giving consent to the disclosure.

Unallowable Activities

The following activities are unallowable with VAWA funding:

- Lobbying
- Fundraising
- Purchase of real property
- Construction
- Physical modifications to building, including minor renovations (such as painting or carpeting)

Food and Beverage Costs

Neither VAWA funds nor match funds can be used to purchase food and/or beverages for any meeting, conference, training, or other event, except if the following applies:

- The location of the event is not in close proximity to food establishments. (It should be a priority to try to secure a location near reasonably priced and accessible commercial food establishments.)
- Not serving food will significantly lengthen the day or necessitate extending the meeting to achieve meeting outcomes.
- A special presentation at a conference requires a plenary address where there is no other time for food to be obtained; or
- Other extenuating circumstances which necessitate the provision of food.

If you include food and/or beverage costs in your application and budget, you must make your case for the appropriate exemption(s) listed above. This may or may not be approved. Include this information in the narrative, section b. *Project overview, systems change & problems.*

Criteria for Funding

Application Components

The following will be addressed in the E-grants application:

A. Applicant Form

Applicants need to complete every field of the form provided. This form lists the authorized representatives for the program and other identifying information.

B. Terms and Conditions

All applicants must acknowledge that they have read the *Terms and Conditions* and that the *Terms and Conditions* will be incorporated into their Grant Agreement if funded.

C. Grant Program Guidelines

All applicants must acknowledge that they have read the *Grant Program Guidelines* and that the *Grant Program Guidelines* will be incorporated into their Grant Agreement if funded. Applicants must also upload signed certifications indicating they will meet the requirements of receiving federal VAWA STOP funding upon being awarded a grant.

D. General and Administrative Standards

All applicants must demonstrate that their organization meets or has a plan for meeting all *General and Administrative Standards* by December 31, 2014.

E. Narrative

Applicants need to address the following (a through d) in a *Microsoft Word* document with ¾" margins, single spaced, with a 12 point font size comparable to "Times New Roman." When ready to submit, the narrative will be uploaded in E-grants. Please use the lettered headings and subheadings for the numbered lists. Out of respect for the application reviewers we ask that applicants follow the page guidelines provided.

a. Overview of total agency – 10 points (1-page)

Provide an overview of the organization, including the agency's mission, brief history, and primary activities/purpose. (If the application project is focused toward a particular underserved community or population, provide evidence of cultural competency in serving women from that community who have been victims of violence.)

b. Project overview, systems change & problems – 30 points (2-4 pages)

Provide, in clear detail:

1. A comprehensive description of the project;
2. Precisely what system changes are being attempted;
3. Articulation of the problems being addressed;
4. An explanation of the strategies you've chosen (e.g., why do you think the strategies you've chosen will work); and

5. How women who are victims of violence will benefit from this project. If applying to serve a particular underserved community or population, identify this and address the unique safety needs of women in that community.)

c. **Evaluation plan – 10 points** (1-page)

Provide a comprehensive plan that clearly describes:

1. What specifically is being evaluated, and why;
2. How the evaluation will be developed; and
3. What evaluation methods and tools will be used.

All collaborative groups in the project must be a part of the evaluation plan.

d. **Sustainability plan – 10 points** (1-page)

Provide evidence of a plan, from the outset, to sustain the accomplishments of the project after the grant period ends. Explain how the systems change efforts will continue and through what means.

F. **Work Plan**

Applicants must download the blank *Work Plan* form in E-grants and then upload it back into E-grants. The work plan should include **objectives** (1 to 4, measurable, identifying what you plan to achieve during the grant period), **activities** (1 to 6 steps or tasks in achieving each objective), **time frames**, and **positions responsible** for each activity.

Reviewers look for clear, measurable objectives that are well planned, can be accomplished within the allotted time, and will be effective in addressing the needs the applicant has identified. Reviewers look for how the proposed project intends to create systems change that will improve the criminal justice system response to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and/or stalking.

G. **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

Each applicant must submit a current (i.e., signed and dated during the development of the proposal) MOU created and signed by the chief executive officers and/or directors of: relevant criminal justice agencies participating in project development and implementation, (e.g., law enforcement and/or prosecution), nonprofit, domestic violence and/or sexual assault victim advocacy organizations, victim service providers, faith communities, and/or other governmental and community agencies or organizations that will collaborate to implement the project. (See Appendix A for the MOU structure and format. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use this format. Instructions are in italics.)

The MOU must be a **single** document with original signatures, **delivered to OJP or postmarked by Wednesday, November 14, 2012**, that does the following:

- Identify the partners and provide a brief history of the collaborative relationship among those partners;
- Specify the extent of each party's participation in developing the application;

- Clearly state the roles and responsibilities each organization or agency would assume to ensure the success of the proposed project;
- Identify the representatives of the planning and development team who will be responsible for developing and implementing project activities and describe how they will work together with project staff;
- Demonstrate a commitment on the part of all project partners to work together to achieve stated project goals;
- Indicate approval of the proposed project budget by all signing parties; and
- Describe the resources each partner would contribute to the project, either through time, in-kind contributions, or grant funds (for example, office space, project staff, training).

Note: Letters of support may not be submitted in lieu of the MOU.

H. Budget

This criterion refers to the reasonableness of line items and total budget in relation to anticipated results. Budget forms will be assessed for the relevance and allowability of costs to program objectives, whether the outcomes appear achievable within the proposed budget, if personnel costs demonstrate adequate staffing and whether budget items are clearly described and justified.

Other Considerations

The following will also be considered in funding decisions:

Inclusiveness of Plan

Reviewers evaluate proposals for how well the needs of women from diverse backgrounds are addressed when developing project activities.

Completeness of Plan

This criterion refers to the applicant's complete and thorough response to all information requested in this application.

Duplication of Services

If more than one organization proposes activities in a given area or for a particular community, applicants may be required to demonstrate that: 1) the proposed project is not a duplication of activities; and/or 2) other programs in the proposed area support the project.

Past Performance

If an applicant is a current or former OJP grantee, consideration will be given to outstanding reports due, uncompleted projects, unspent or returned funds, status in regard to compliance with applicable standards and termination of a grant due to noncompliance with the terms of a grant agreement.

Geographic and Other Considerations

Consideration will be given to the geographic location of proposed services to ensure the overall distribution of funds throughout the state. Priority will be given to ensuring equitable distribution of funds between programs that address sexual assault and those that address domestic violence.

Rejection of Proposals and Incurring Costs

This RFP is made for information and planning purposes only. The State of Minnesota does not intend to award any grant solely on the basis of a response made to this request or pay for any information solicited or obtained. The state reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received as a result of this RFP. The State of Minnesota is not liable for costs incurred by applicants prior to the issuance of a grant.

Reporting

All programs awarded funds are required to complete program narrative and financial reports in E-grants. Grantees will also be required to submit the *U.S. Department of Justice VAWA STOP Annual Progress Report* at the conclusion of each calendar year.

EXAMPLE

Memorandum of Understanding

(use as many pages as needed)

This document constitutes a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between {applicant agency's name here} and local partners regarding [name of project here]. Those local partners are: [list all partners].

History

[Provide a brief history of collaborative relationships between all agencies involved in the project.]

Planning and Development

[Identify the representatives of the planning and development team who will be responsible for developing and implementing project activities. Describe how they will work together and with project staff. Specify the extent of each agency's participation in developing the application.]

Agency Roles, Responsibilities and Resources

[Name of Applicant Agency]

[Describe the role, responsibilities, estimated time commitment and contributing resources (for example: staff time, meeting space, supplies, etc.) for this project.]

[Name of Partner Agency #1]

[Describe the role, responsibilities, estimated time commitment and contributing resources (for example: staff time, meeting space, supplies, etc.) for this project.]

[Continue listing each partner agency's roles, responsibilities, and resources.]

Partnership Agreement

All partners agree to participate in the project as detailed within this MOU. All partners have reviewed and approve of the proposed project budget. All partners agree to their roles, responsibilities, and resources as listed in this MOU and are committed to working together to achieve the stated project goals. All partners have been involved in developing the evaluation plan of this project. All partners understand these funds are for time-limited special projects to create systems change by improving the criminal justice system's response to violence against women, and that these funds are not intended for on-going direct advocacy services to victims or to sustain existing programming. All partners agree to abide by federal and state guidelines regarding equal opportunity, Drug-Free Workplace and financial reporting.

Signatures

I hereby agree to serve as the lead for my agency's sections of this project, and I agree to abide by the terms and conditions contained in this Memorandum of Understanding between *[applicant agency's name here]* and my partner agency(ies) for the purpose of *[project's name here]*.

Name of individual & title

date

Partner agency name

Name of individual & title

date

Partner agency name

Name of individual & title

date

Partner agency name

Name of individual & title

date

Partner agency name

Name of individual & title

date

Partner agency name